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Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

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It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young.

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'.

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A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

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Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two cheliks and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval.

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In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted.

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But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Marn, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1941 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahna Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said, 'well, why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

624 Quarrels are equally dangerous. They not only destroy one of the chief of the Muria's treasures—his sense of tribal solidarity—but like adultery they bring the vengeance of heaven upon the village that indulges in them. They must, therefore, be avoided and if they do occur peace must be made at once. In Binjhli Tetku and his brother Maria had a row over a field and beat each other. Their *saga*-relatives hurried to the village, they got salphi and mahua liquor, and held a panch. The Gaita dipped a gold ear-ring in water and sprinkled it over the two offenders; he dipped the ear-ring also in the liquor. Each brother gave the other a drink and peace was established. When Dandu and Aitu quarrelled in Masora, everyone was afraid that some epidemic would attack the village. They both did indeed fall ill, their bodies swelling mysteriously. They called the Gaita and gave him a pig, five measures of rice and a rupee's worth of liquor to sacrifice. He did so, praying, 'O Mahapurub, you are the earth, you are our mother. We have made a mistake. Even an elephant with four feet sometimes slips; what can we men with only two feet do? We give you this offering, let there be no more trouble.' And he warned the quarrellers that next time it would cost them ten rupees to make peace.

152 Everything in Muria society is thus calculated to render jealousy unnecessary, dangerous and undignified. Its absence is further proved, not only by a mass of statements and absence of the criminal cases that would certainly arise from it, but by concrete instances of social practice. For example, the Muria does not insist on his wife coming to him as a virgin, nor does she expect that her husband should find in her the first girl he has ever loved. When we consider the vast number of peoples who have required an exactly opposite state of things, we see how free the Muria must be from jealousy affecting the period before marriage.

593 After marriage, says the best Muria opinion, husband and wife should never
152 refer to their lives in the ghotul, still less should they rebuke each other with their old love-affairs. The very fact that exceptions to this are so carefully noted shows how rare they are. A Saidar of Botha is said to have forced his wife to swear that she never slept with any boy in her ghotul. The Diwan of Nayanar is said to have constantly nagged his young wife about a former lover till she stopped him by saying, 'Very well, if it is true—as you say—that I love him so much, I will go and live with him'. At Alor the Gaita said, 'A boy may try to get his wife to confess what she did in her ghotul, but he has no right to, and she can always say "Whatever I did, you did the same or more" '. It was considered a very severe rebuke indeed when the Kotwar of Almar shouted at his lazy wife, 'Why don't you get up earlier to work? Didn't your parents teach you how to work, or did they only train you to sleep with the chelik night and day?'

593 A husband is generally very good to a wife who as a motiari got a child by
152 another man. He takes the child as his own and the convention is that no reference should ever be made to the matter. This would not be so astonishing
837 if it only happened when a girl conceived in the ghotul, for any sensible man would regard it as the logical conclusion of what he had already accepted, that his wife was sleeping with other youths throughout the period of their engagement. But it is remarkable, I think, when a boy accepts a girl who has run away with another man whom she obviously loves and is going to have a child who will constantly remind her of this former lover. An incident at Samalpur is typical of scores of others which I have recorded. In this village the Sirdar of the ghotul made a girl pregnant and ran away with her. They were brought back and he was fined five rupees and the girl was married to her betrothed.

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presence Chamru twice struck his wife on the back with the handle of his axe. 674x 578

That night one of the neighbours was watching his crops as usual and as he was going home after making a round of the fields, he heard a noise in Chamru's house. He went there and found the man sitting near the door supporting his dead wife in his arms and weeping loudly. Chamru declared that he had killed her. The neighbour went away and brought his friends, and before them Chamru declared that he had hanged his wife and children because they had run away. He said that he would get another wife the next morning, and tried to borrow rice and bullocks for her bride-price.

The people then went to the house, and found the dead body of Hirme lying near the door and the little boy and girl hanging from a rafter. The next day they went to the police station and reported that Hirme had hanged herself, and the two children had followed her example, during Chamru's absence at the Alnar bazaar.

It is evident that Chamru intended to make a deal with the villagers. He supposed that, if he frankly admitted what he had done and paid suitable compensation, they would agree to hush the matter up, and indeed it is obvious that they did agree to do so. What they did not realize was that a police investigation was bound to discover the weak points in their story. Directly the police came to investigate the alleged suicides, they found suspicious inconsistencies. For example, the knot by which the rope round the boy's neck was tied was not a slip-knot, and it would have been difficult for him to have died by strangulation under the circumstances. The girl's neck was tied with a cloth which was hardly adapted to kill her, and her feet were hanging close to a heap of rice on which she could easily have supported herself. The medical evidence immediately disposed of any idea that the three victims had met their deaths by hanging. The usual marks of such a death—constriction of the neck, ligature mark in the neck interrupted at one side, open eyes, protruding tongue, clenched hands, dislocation of the second vertebra from the first—were absent. Medical opinion was that the cause of death in all three cases was congestion of

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674 the chest due to shock, but it was certainly not due to hanging.

626 When these facts were put to the villagers they, seeing that the matter was known, changed their attitude; and three different lots of people, none of whom apparently had any kind of enmity towards Chamru in spite of his allegations to that effect, described how on the night of the murder he had admitted killing his wife and children. Chamru, however, insisted that he had not met his wife and children on the way back from the bazaar as the witnesses described, but that on reaching home late at night he had, as he entered, collided against the naked corpse of his wife hanging from the roof. He had taken a blazing piece of wood and had discovered his son and daughter in a similar plight. He had cut down his wife's naked body and wrapped it in the cloth with which she had hanged herself, and had sat there weeping and wondering whether he himself should not commit suicide.

There was abundant evidence, however, that Chamru had met his wife and children on the way home from the Alnar bazaar and had gone with them to the house. He was seen in their company by the boy who had been left to guard the building. Nobody saw what happened from sunset until late at night when his perhaps not wholly hypocritical cries of distress attracted the attention of a neighbour. But it is obvious that he was present in the house, and that no other person could have come in and killed his wife and children. Frustrated sexual desire, injured pride, jealousy at the children's affection for their mother, hunger and fatigue (for Hirme's absence meant there was no one to cook or do the house-work) drove the distracted man to a shocking vengeance and his own death on the scaffold in the end.

674 678 Marvi Paklu and his wife Dallo had been married for about three years, and had two children who died. They got on fairly well together for some time. But particularly after the death of the children disagreements arose; Dallo appears to have been that rather unusual type among aboriginals, a frigid woman who refused full sexual privileges to her husband and yet at the same time was jealous of him and possessive. Two years after their marriage she went to an uncle at Dilmilli without any proper clothes and only

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674 Section 323, I.P.C. for what he admitted, voluntarily causing
578 hurt to his wife.
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At Dugeli I met Bugori and his senior wife Jimme. Bugori, a most attractive young man, had been able to win the affection of two women both of whom appear to have loved him devotedly. Unfortunately Jimme's jealousy knew no bounds, and one day, when the two women were out together working in the jungle, Jimme, who was robust and powerful, tried to kill the younger girl with her axe. But she survived, and Jimme went to jail for three years. During
[626] her absence the younger wife remained with Bugori. But when Jimme was due for release, the village held a panchayat and decided that the younger wife must go to live at her mother's house for fear that Jimme might try to kill her again. When Jimme came home, therefore, after Bugori had
[783] given the usual feast to the villagers and had purified her of jail defilement, he took her to his house where she has lived very happily and borne him children. He visits his younger wife in her mother's village from time to time, but does not allow her to come to his house for fear of another tragedy.

Markami Handa had two wives, but does not seem to have been able to keep the affection of the younger, an attractive girl about twenty-four years old. She fell in love with another man and he killed the husband to prevent him taking revenge. Marvi Kesa had three wives, and ill-treated the youngest. One day, after he had beaten her, she ran away to her father's house. There was a quarrel there, and Kesa killed his father-in-law. Poyami Masa had two wives, and a Dhobi tried to seduce the elder. The younger discovered the intrigue, and probably thought it was an excellent opportunity to get rid of her rival. She told her husband, and he was so angry that he stabbed the older woman with an arrow and was himself sentenced to life imprisonment.

Tati Harma had three wives. At the time of the tragedy which brings his name into this record, only two were living. The younger wife had borne him four children, but Harma used to beat her constantly saying that she did not work properly and ate too much. So serious were the disputes in the home that a panchayat fined husband and wife four

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674 round his neck, and strung him to a tree. In the next, where according to the medical evidence the murderer strangled a girl with a thin rope, he tied the body to the branch of a tamarind tree, but so carelessly that she was not found hanging but sitting on the ground. In the third, Ujji Poda tied a rope round his victim's neck and broke it. He then tied the broken end to the roof of a field-shed and left it dangling, the idea being to suggest that the man had hanged himself, but that the rope had snapped and allowed the body to fall on the ground. Poda then bribed everybody to make a report of suicide to the police.

Again, when Poyami Masa stabbed his wife with an arrow, his idea seems to have been to suggest suicide; but unfortunately for him he did not do his work properly and the poor woman lived long enough to tell the villagers the truth.

In two other cases the murderers arranged the bodies of their victims to look as though they had been attacked by tigers.

In three cases the murderers attempted to hide the body. In one, the concealment was done so clumsily that marks of blood and every trace of a violent crime was left on the scene of the crime. In another case an attempt was made to suggest that the deceased had met a natural death by drowning, and in another a report was made that the dead man was an epileptic and had killed himself by falling in a fit onto a stump of wood.

674 626 The Maria's attempts to put their crimes on to innocent people are less discreditable than they appear. The idea seems to be that, if an obviously innocent person is accused, he will be able to clear himself in Court, and the police may then drop their investigation and both the innocent and guilty will escape. In 1940, in a village near Aranpur a man was arrested for shooting someone with an arrow, and the prosecution witnesses actually testified that they saw him do so. He denied the crime, and presently another man went to the police and confessed that he was the real culprit. But there was no evidence against the second man and both persons were acquitted. The following year at Aranpur when Barse Chewa was arrested for the murder of his father-in-law, his relatives tried to involve Chewa's brother

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in the case. They declared that the brother had gone to a Siraha, and had asked him to perform sacrifices which would protect him from the consequences of the crime of which he was the real culprit. It was easily proved, however, that he could have had nothing to do with the matter, and it is probable that the Aranpur people were hoping by this trick to secure the release of both the brothers. This will explain other attempts to involve young men in crimes of which they were obviously innocent. In one case the accused, a youth of only eighteen, tried to involve his brother, though in the end he confessed his crime before the Court. In another, the villagers tried to force a young man to admit the crime and the youth's own father actually took him to the police station for this purpose. The Sub-Inspector refused to accept his confession.

In the Gumiapal murder, however, where the real murderer was the Gaita of the village, the people combined to protect their priest and put the blame on an innocent man. They forced the Kotwar to implicate him and make a false report. When I met the murderer fourteen years afterwards in jail, he was still insisting on his innocence and that the real murderer was the man whom he had tried to implicate so many years before.

But these attempts to shift responsibility are uncommon. It is remarkable how quickly, once the police have arrived on the scene, a Maria admits his guilt, and in 81 of our 100 cases such confession was made.

We should not perhaps assume that these confessions are necessarily evidence of the truthfulness and simplicity of the aboriginals. They may be, but we would do well to take into account the judgment of Sir Cecil Walsh.

> The Indian police are past masters in detective work amongst their own kith and kin, and are endowed with exceptional gifts of insight into the mentality of the average uneducated villager. They are without scruple, and extraordinarily clever in their methods of extracting information. To take what is probably a fairly frequent example, they will tell the man as soon as he is arrested that his only chance of escape is to make a full and candid statement. The majority of men, in such circumstances, are cowardly, and only too ready to sell their associates, if they think by doing so they can purchase immunity. When the statement has been made, the next step is

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killed Bondki, the wife of Dasru, a panchayat was held by the Pargana Manjhi, and the husband of the murdered woman was given five rupees, a bullock, a pig and some rice. The panchayat received twenty rupees, of which the Pargana Manjhi and the village Peda took five each, the Kandki (headman's assistant) four and the Kotwar one. The villagers then decided to hush up the incident, and it only came to the ears of the police through an informer. When Kartami Hirma killed his baby daughter while he was beating his wife, the panchayat demanded a fine of twentyfive rupees in consideration of which they agreed to hush the matter up. The accused paid five rupees on account and promised the rest within a month. The panchayat even seized the stick with which the beating had been done. Then the Kotwar reported that the child had been still-born. 627 682

When Poriami Handa was killed, the villagers forced his widow to accept compensation from the murderer and to keep the matter a secret. But she told what had happened to her brother-in-law, and he reported the matter to the police. In another case a group of men who had been involved in a robbery killed two of their number to prevent them giving them away. The headman was the cousin of one of the murderers. He called the people of the village together and persuaded them to agree to say nothing about the incident, and it was only through the efforts of the father of one of the victims that the matter came to light. Even then the headman attempted to bribe the police. In this case the only reason for concealment seems to have been the friendship of the headman for one of the people involved. A similar reason seems to have influenced the villagers in another murder. When Miriami Harma fell into a rage at being accused of theft at a panchayat, he snatched his baby daughter out of the arms of his wife, and holding her by the legs dashed her on the ground, killing her immediately. Possibly the members of the panchayat feared that they would be involved, and the next day the murderer and the Kotwar went to the police station and reported that the child had been bitten by a cobra.

Where the murderer is a man of influence in the village, such as one of the civil or religious headmen, he may attempt to force the people to conceal his crime. Manjhi Banda was 626

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626 the Peda of Turri village, and he said that it was his own brother he had killed and it was nobody else's affair. He even forbade the ferrymen to take the body across the Indrawati, and had it buried himself. It is probable that the villagers were influenced by the circumstances of the case. The murder occurred as a result of a quarrel about the partition of the family property which the dead man demanded. But local opinion seems to have been that, since the two brothers were married to two sisters and were thus practically one family of which the elder brother was the patriarchal head, the dead man was wrong in demanding a separate share. Ujji Poda was a well-to-do man and persuaded the villagers to make a false report to the police. Here too there was probably a general belief that Poda had acted rightly in killing the man who had interfered with his wife's chastity. When Gunda was killed by his son, the villagers hushed up the matter partly because the murdered man was the clan-priest of the Hemla Clan, and his son automatically succeeded him, and partly because of the justifiable nature of the crime. Even the Court considered the murder so excusable that it awarded a sentence of only one month's imprisonment.

In another case the murderer so terrorized the village that nobody dared to go to report the crime. At first the villagers refused to cremate the corpse. But the murderer threatened to kill the headman and burn him with the corpse, and insisted upon it being cremated. It was only after a week that the Peda was able to slip out of the village and make a report. When Oyami Masa of Khutepal killed his junior wife by beating her, he first of all told the villagers that the woman had died of fever. But when they examined the body and found marks of beating, Masa, who was the Waddai of the village and a very domineering and influential man, prevented them from making a report and insisted that the body should be cremated immediately. It was not till three weeks later that any report was made at the police station, and by this time, of course, it had become impossible to prove that Masa had intended to murder his wife or had used sufficient force to kill her. He was, therefore, sentenced to only one year's imprisonment: his presence of mind probably saved him from the gallows.

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An ingenious attempt to hoodwink the police occurred at Jhoriabadhan in 1923. After the mysterious disappearance of a little boy aged two-and-a-half years the police came to investigate, and the villagers took the constable to the thrashing-floor whence the child had disappeared, and there showed him a boy about six years old. They told him that this was the missing boy and that he had been found wandering in the fields. Even the child's own mother declared that this was the lost boy, and since all the members of the family as well as the villagers supported her, the police went away. There is no doubt, however, that a child did disappear and it is probable that he was offered as a human sacrifice.

In one case, but only one, a prosecution witness was so troubled by his family that he committed suicide. On the whole, however, the Maria appear to co-operate with the police very well. In 88 cases out of 100, they assisted in some way or other. Sometimes they reported the matter at the police station. Sometimes they themselves arrested the murderer and kept him in custody until the police arrived. They co-operated by assisting at the inquest which is held in a village when the police arrive to investigate a suspicious death. In one case the villagers took an active and dangerous part in pursuing a convict who had escaped from jail with the result that one of their number was killed.

TABLE TWENTY-ONE

Illustrating the kind of assistance given to police in 100 cases

Information withheld from police	12
Homicide reported by villagers	79
Accused arrested by villagers	25
Accused gives himself up to police	9

This was the exciting pursuit of Markami Mundra in 1934. Mundra was convicted in 1933 and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for an act of violence. On 3 May 1934, he escaped from jail with another convict and a proclamation was issued for their arrest. A Sub-Inspector of Police went at once to Gudra, Mundra's own village, and told the people that a reward of fifty rupees had been offered for his

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626 capture, and some constables went from village to village
648 looking for him. Very daringly Mundra in his prisoner's clothes went to his house in Gudra, and stayed there till his mother came home from a bazaar. Thence he went to a Kalar's house near Nayanar. The police heard that he was somewhere about, and without knowing that Mundra was hiding there, went to the house to get fire to light their cigarettes. Mundra seeing them and supposing that he was discovered rushed out with a knife in his hand, and tried to stab one of the constables. But they caught him and tied him up with the help of the villagers. They took him to the Kuakonda police station, which they reached at dawn. Thence they went on to Dantewara, which they reached late at night and put up in the Kotwar's house. They tied Mundra's feet to the leg of the cot on which one of the constables was sleeping, and his handcuffed hand to a pillar. But while they were all asleep, Mundra managed to escape again. This time he went to his maternal uncle and got his handcuffs broken. Then dressed in a small loin-cloth and carrying a bow and arrow, he went to his house and took away his wife Kase.

Meanwhile the police went back to Gudra and with the help of the villagers searched the surrounding forest. For eight days the search went on, the Maria taking a leading part in it. At last they got information that Mundra had been seen in someone's field. They again beat the forest and at last found Mundra and his wife. Mundra threatened them with his arrows and managed to escape. But the villagers caught his wife and brought her home. Another week passed with Mundra lurking in the jungle, and one day when Kase went to work in the fields, he took her away again. The Maria, led by Markami Bhima, their headman, again searched for him, but without success, until at last they found him and his wife on the Kopli Hill. Mundra turned upon his pursuers and shot at one of them, his arrow hitting the ground a little in front of him. Once again the search-party succeeded in capturing the unfortunate Kase, and she was beaten and tied up inside her house with a large party of Maria guarding her.

During the night the woman wept loudly, and attracted by her cries Mundra came and stood before the house and said

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that he would kill the men who were pursuing him and troubling her. He accused his fellow-Maria of doing more than the police for his arrest. Then he struck a beam of the house with his axe in token of revenge and went away. After some days—it was now over two months since he escaped from Dantewara—Mundra again went to look for his wife, but was unable to find her. Markami Bhima the headman, who had been threatened with death by Mundra, had been taking many precautions. But Mundra somehow managed to get into his house at night and killed him by shooting him at close range with an arrow. A week later Mundra went into the Madras Presidency. His hiding-place was betrayed by a woman who met some Maria from the original village who were still searching for him, and the police managed to arrest him on 2 February 1935.

The most remarkable thing about this case was the very large part taken by the Maria in assisting the police. They were no doubt influenced by the reward of fifty rupees that was offered, but even so their help was remarkable and Mundra greatly resented it.

III

Why do the villagers conceal murders from the police? We should not too hastily attribute this to a merely savage absence of the civic instinct. There are many other reasons. First and foremost they still consider that they should settle everything themselves. They believe that it is only in a tribal Court that the real facts can be known. We have seen that they are generally unwilling to testify against a powerful priest or magician who might revenge himself on them. They are equally unwilling to assist the police where they believe a murder has been justified.

Then they fear the annoyance and expense of having police subordinates quartered on them and the expense and waste of time of having to go to a distant Court, especially at the more busy periods of the agricultural year. Again the real reason for a crime is often something which the Maria dislike revealing in Court and which they despair of making outsiders understand. Another powerful factor is the supernatural danger—and the expense of avoiding it—of a post-

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things they provided a pot of rice-beer and a pig for his funeral rites.

V

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE DEAD

The reaction of society to violent crime may be seen from the funerary arrangements that are made both for the murderer and his victim.[1]

In the great majority of cases these arrangements are complicated by the fact that the corpse of the deceased is not available. It is generally taken to headquarters for post-mortem examination, and when a man is hanged in jail his body is disposed of by the prison authorities. This does not mean, however, that the funeral ceremonies are omitted. Clothes and other property belonging to the dead are brought back from the Magistrate's Court or from the jail, and these are used to represent the corpse. When Markami Deva killed his wife at Darbha the people brought her clothes, necklace and armlets to the village. These relics were not brought into the house, but were put outside in the yard. The usual funeral drum was not beaten, but the relatives gathered and the brother of the husband (the husband himself was in police custody) put haldi and oil on the things, and a relative by marriage carried them in a basket to a pyre which had been prepared outside the village. Men and women walked behind throwing seeds of rice, maize and pulse mixed together in the basket.

The pyre was under a tree over which a great camel's-foot creeper was growing. They carried the basket round it seven times. Relatives put small pieces of cloth upon it in the usual way and removed them. They hung a bit of cloth on the tree. Then they lit the pyre and went away. They did not erect an uraskal, though here they said that they would

[1] Everywhere in India the ghost of a murdered man or a suicide is dangerous. The Lushai think a victim's ghost will haunt the murderer and drive him mad. J. Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), p. 76. Both the Lushai and Lakher perform ceremonies to make the dead man's ghost harmless and to ensure that it becomes the servant of the slayer in the other world. If this is not done, the ghost may blind, lame or paralyse the man who killed him. N. E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 213. Fraser gives many examples from other parts of the world. Sir J. G. Fraser, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III. pp. 103 ff.